

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3211

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
House Minority Leader  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2020

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy,

As you consider legislative responses to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its impact on the American economy, we request that you provide for cost of living adjustments when calculating eligibility and rates for economic stimulus payments. New York State has become the epicenter of the pandemic and will suffer the greatest economic impact, yet current proposals fall short of recognizing the true need in the state.

New York has the third-highest average cost of living after Hawaii and the District of Columbia, as calculated by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, when adjusting for relative wage differences across states. Consequently, a \$50,000 yearly income in New York provides the same economic status as someone making \$41,883 in Texas, or \$37,953 in Kentucky. More specifically, the proposal to phase out economic stimulus payments on salaries over \$75,000 negatively impacts New Yorkers who earn real wages equivalent to \$55,000 elsewhere. This means that New Yorkers who need support during this time of crisis will receive less support than equivalent Americans in other states. This is patently unfair.

By all accounts, New York is suffering more than any other state in this pandemic. Over 15,000 New Yorkers have tested positive for COVID-19, with over 9,000 from the New York City area alone, making New York the most impacted state in the nation with over half of all cases nationwide. The economic impact has been disproportionate as well—over 570,000 people work in the restaurant industry alone, while over a million workers in the hotel and leisure industries, both of which have been decimated by quarantine orders. Millions of New Yorkers are already feeling the economic strain that coronavirus has inflicted, and they deserve a government response that recognizes their condition. Moreover, cost of living adjustments are necessary to ensure that New York's economy recovers fully and quickly from this crisis.

We therefore urge that in the forthcoming stimulus package you include adjustments that recognize the relative differences in costs of living across the country, and that middle-class Americans have access to economic relief no matter in which state they live.

Sincerely,



Max Rose  
Member of Congress



Lee Zeldin  
Member of Congress



Yvette Clarke  
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



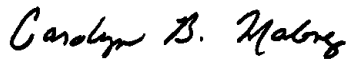
José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



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Kathleen Rice  
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Carolyn Maloney  
Member of Congress



Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress